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SUBJECT: CONDEMNATORY HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION ON BURMA  
RIDES TO VICTORY IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

¶1. (U) A strong and unambiguous resolution deploring the situation of human rights in Burma gathered momentum and passed by a significant margin of 57 votes in a late-night session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 22. The final vote count was 82 in favor (U.S.) - 25 opposed - 45 abstentions. 45 countries cosponsored the resolution, which the EU earlier introduced in the UNGA Third Committee. In the GA, no delegation attempted to cut off debate and a vote with a so-called "no-action motion." (Note: When the Third Committee took action on the same resolution last month, Burma tabled a no-action motion, which the Third Committee defeated by a margin of 8 votes. The condemnatory resolution itself then passed by a vote of 79-28-63 abstentions.)

¶2. (U) Over four pages long, Resolution A/61/443 on the "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar" is an explicit and substantive catalogue and condemnation of current violations. The text criticizes, among other practices, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence by members of the armed forces, torture and deaths in custody, forced labor, trafficking in persons, disrespect for the rule of law, attacks on ethnic villages, restrictions on the National League for Democracy and other political parties, and the absence of progress toward democratic reform. The resolution "strongly calls upon" the Government of Burma to end: military operations that target civilians; recruitment of child soldiers; systematic forced displacement of persons; restraints on peaceful political activity; detention of political prisoners; and hindrance of access to all parts of the country for the UN and international humanitarian organizations, among other measure clearly aimed "to end impunity." Full text is available on DRL's website: [www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/c1317](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/c1317).

¶3. (U) The U.S., EU, Australia and Canada renewed last-minute but strenuous lobbying efforts in New York and capitals to ensure a successful vote in the GA Plenary. Notably among those countries whom we targeted and that indeed changed their vote from Third Committee, were: Bahamas (from Abstention to Yes); Congo (from No to Yes); Saudi Arabia (from Abstention to Yes); and Tanzania (from Abstention to Yes). Many of the ASEAN neighbors, however, continued to register caution. Voting No were Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Viet Nam. Abstentions came from Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Japan and notably South Korea joined the Yes votes.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: The vote in the General Assembly keeps world pressure and attention focused on a regime that egregiously violates its citizens' human rights. Vigorous lobbying, coupled with a limited number of countries that have a vital interest in Burma, helped ensure a successful outcome.  
WOLFF